1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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basis of their inherent nature of being Dua or Yiritja, but that the moiety grouping of things takes on spatial definitions and specific location. The importance of the intertwining of these two concepts can be seen in the larger myths such as Wawilak, Djunkgao, Barnumbir, which reflect their division of the things of nature and culture into two moiety categories and group the objects of nature accordingly because they are the property of the clans. The clans are thought of as owning their totems and the right to certain minute variations of the ritual. The ownership of the land includes the use of it, but there would be no thought of excluding the members of other clans from using it; rather, mutual use would be encouraged if the two groups were friendly.

The objects of the technology are personally owned, but a number of brothers and fathers and sons who have cooperated in an enterprise such as boat building have a feeling of collective ownership (see pages 63, 70).

The concept of incorporeal property is not very highly developed. A man's name is his own, but other members of his clan could possess it if their parents or grandparents who named them had wished it so. There are no songs or painting designs, curing or killing magics, which are considered, as elsewhere, the property of any one individual or group. Certain totemic designs are associated with clans or moieties, and it would be impossible for members of the other clans or moiety to use these designs or emblems unless given permission under special circumstances; but these as well as totems and rituals are not so much properties in an economic sense as integral parts of the structure of the clan. To a great degree this is also true of the land. To remove these incorporeal elements from the clan and moiety structures would cause a complete reorganization of those structures, and only in a most secondary and derivative sense can they be thought of as in an economic category; yet the effect of their being part of the clan and moiety configuration has many of the attributes of our concept of property.

The Murngins' undeveloped sense of property seems to be associated with their lack of interest in developing their technological equipment, and both of these social elements seem to root in the desire to be free from the burdens and responsibilities of objects which would interfere with the society's itinerant existence. The equivalents of incorporeal property in other tribes are here felt to be part of the clan or moiety, i.e., not objects for the exclusive use of any one individual group to dispose of as it saw fit. The medicine man's magical ritual

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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424 is a possible exception since he alone can exercise his magic; but here
156 too the feeling is not so much of ownership as of having obtained his magical equipment by inherent ability combined with a mystic experience. In the west the magician's power can be passed from father to son, or to some extent from mother's brother to sister's son, and a man can acquire his magical rituals from others; but essentially the concept of magical power is much like our modern concept of talent and ability.

435 The governing principle in the evaluation of objects which will be kept permanently by their owner is the ease with which they can be transported by human carriage or dugout canoe. The amount of labor consumed in their manufacture contributes in some degree to their high value as individual property, and the relative scarcity of an object in nature or in trade also makes its contributions to Murngin economic values; but the final desideratum is the relative ease of transportation
[492] of the article, since this society has no domesticated beast of burden. Metal containers obtained in trade with white missionaries are extremely scarce and highly prized; yet if of very large size they will be given to someone remaining in camp or cut up and put to other uses.

181 The ultimate value is freedom of movement. Basically the largest
484 factor contributing to this value is the shifting food supply which necessitates change of location; but the feeling for change of location permeates the whole society and has become the most positive motivating factor in the thinking of any Australian aborigine, including the Murngin. All the white ranchers and frontier settlers know and have to make allowance for the partially acculturated blacks' uncontrollable desire "to take a walk about," chiefly under the compulsion of movement from place to place but also because of love for homeland and native culture. The desire to go to other places is forever present in the mental constitution of a black's behavior. If he is in his own clan land where he was born and where he grew to maturity—the center of his cultural heritage—he still feels the urge to go to the next horde or food ground. A flexible material culture and a like technological equipment must, and do, form his adaptation to the natural environment.

(For further consideration of this economic problem, particularly from the point of view of the selection or rejection of exotic articles from other cultures, the reader should see Appendix I, Social Change in North Australia.)

181 It might be argued that the factor of transportation did not prevent
796 a luxuriant growth of ceremonial paraphernalia, such as totemic emblems, grave posts, ceremonial objects of dress, etc. Although the native

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The upper panel of Pl. 94D represents the mangrove swamps, intersected by fresh-water streams, lines of lozenge-shaped designs. The transverse panel, *a*, is the aboriginal path from Port Bradshaw to Caledon Bay, and the footprints those of *Nalili*. The lozenge shapes on the lower panel are salt-water areas, and the parallel lines between, sand-hills on the sea coast.

Nguru-gujameri and his Wife, Njinpili-lingou

At one time a mythical *jiritja* man, *Nguru-gujameri*, and his wife, *Njinpili-lingou*, lived at Djerakoi, near Cape Shield.

One day *Nguru-gujameri* and a companion, *Ikawunga*, were spearing fish in a mangrove swamp when they noticed a number of crab-holes around the base of a tree, and the many tracks made by the creatures as they ran from one hole to another. *Nguru-gujameri* suggested to his companion, *Ikawunga*, that they should make a painting of the crab-holes and the marks of the *gunjun* crabs, so that they could keep the design for themselves.[91] The two men did this, but before they died they showed the design to some young men of their group so that the memory of it would not be lost. Since then the design has been passed from father to son. No other aboriginal is allowed to paint these marks without the owner's permission.

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Two paintings illustrate the myth of *Nguru-gujameri* and *Njinpili-lingou*.

On Pl. 95A the upper panel pictures the sea and the lower, the land. The overall pattern of the upper panel is the crab-holes and tracks of the crab, *gunjun*, which formed the design mentioned in the myth.

In the right-hand squares are four cormorants, *madu*, in black. One of them is standing on a rock. The two squares on the extreme right contain two parrot-fish which were too large for the cormorants to swallow. The four grey reef herons, *kuulun-witbit*, in the centre and left, lived on the sand-crabs, *gunjun*. In the lower right panels are six emus and three yams, and in the left, five emus and their footprints. The curious sixth design in the left-hand panel is a cockatoo in flight. The emus and cockatoos depicted on the lower panels are the same as those disturbed by the woman, *Njinpili-lingou*.

In the upper right of Pl. 95C, *Nguru-gujameri* is standing on a rock, spearing fish. He has a string of three in his left hand and has transfixed another with the spear held in his right. The narrow cross-hatched vertical band between *Nguru-gujameri* and the upper left panel, *b*, is the tree, mentioned in the myth, around the base of which *Ikawunga* and *Nguru-gujameri* saw the crab-holes. In panel *b* the crab-holes are indicated by dots at the junction of the series of wavy lines, and the marks made in the mud by the feet of the crabs by the many short straight lines. In the lower left-hand corner of the same panel are the holes and tracks made by the *gunjun* crabs.

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91. This design, like others in the Yirrkalla series (Fig. 65), belongs exclusively to a language group, or *mata*, of aborigines. This myth explains the origin of one of those designs which has now been identified.

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 CH17 Maragin CH17

unaware of the danger that threatened them, were easily surrounded and killed. Later, however, the fish people came to life again and changed themselves into the *dua* fish that now live in the sea, the barramundi, the garfish, the rock cod and many others. At the same time, the home of the *dua* snakes was transformed into the Tjutjulili swamps, where many of the snakes still live and which others visit periodically to renew their venom by drinking its waters.[33]

Two bark paintings deal with the snakes at the Tjutjulili swamps.

In the upper panel of Pl. 117D[34] are the *dua* snakes of Tjutjulili. On the upper right of the lower panel the same snakes, *dunbania*, the tiger snake, *balara*, the grey snake, *witi*, the black snake, *jungu*, the mangrove snake, *napili*, *waimeilu*, *garnunga*, *malara-korup* and *lutia*. On the left at *a* are the gunmas, the *gulaljurn*, the 'dugs' of the serpents. In the lower right at *b* is *Djijal*,[35] the boomerang man, with his luney baskets on one arm and a boomerang in his left hand. The panels of short lines above represent the rain created by *Djijal*. His association with the *dua* snakes is not known.

On Pl. 118F, *dunbania* the tiger snake and *wurnbo* (unidentified), accompanied by the blue-tongued lizard, *bungalung*, are travelling to the Tjutjulili swamps so that they can drink its water and thus strengthen their venom before they bite the aborigines.

The upper cross-hatched chevron design is the Tjutjulili swamps. The three short snakes are the *dunbania* and the seven longer ones the *wurnbo*. The blue-tongued lizard occupies the central position.

The Jiritja Snake, Burudji, at the Kaulatung River

In *bumun* (creation) times the snake, *burudji*, accompanied by his wife, left the Rose River country[36] and travelled northward until he reached Naluri, near the present-day Kaulatung River. Until *burudji*'s arrival there were no natural features at Naluri. *Burudji*, however, made rain which filled all the swamps, lagoons and fresh-water streams emptying into the Naluri swamps. After that the mythical snake created a number of the groups of men and women who now live in the vicinity of Blue Mud Bay, the *mangilili*, the *wonguri*, the *gumaitj* and the *gulubringu*. To each of these groups[37] he gave a special design which they must use in the ceremonies.

The central transverse panel, *a*, of Pl. 118E is a lumbum swamp at Naluri and the panels *d*, *d*, *d*, *d*, extensive lagoons at Naluri. A fresh-water stream flows along the lower central vertical cross-hatched panel *c*, to the lumbum swamp at *a*, and another along the upper cross-hatched vertical panel *b*, entering swamp *a*. These swamps and streams were all created by the snake, *burudji*.

33. Myths, p. 260.
34. Myth of Djijal, p. 282, and bark painting, Pl. 92D.
35. Interpretation by P. M. Sexton.
36. Map, Fig. 1.
37. This is a parallel myth to that of *Banaitja* and *Lailjun*, p. 270, explaining the origin of some of the *jiritja* groups of Blue Mud Bay and their specific designs.

31 Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OI17 Maragin OI17

The yams are engraved in panel *a*, and their foliage indicated by the decorative chevron-like designs at *b* and *c*. The pattern *d* on the upper right, with a meandering line down the centre, is a small fresh-water stream near the totemic place.

The Man, Tualpa, and the Sacred Tree of Blue Mud Bay

This painted pipe represents a sacred tree which once grew on the shores of Blue Mud Bay. One day a man (unnamed), not knowing that the tree was sacred, cut it down to make a special spear, called *bununguna*. *Tualpa*, the owner of the tree, was so angry over the vandalism that he speared the culprit. The dead tree now lies at the mouth of a lagoon emptying into Blue Mud Bay. During the wet season it is submerged by the fresh water flowing from the swamps into the sea. When the swamps are dry, the log is sometimes covered by the high tide.

The transverse bands, *e*, *e*, on Pl. 128B represent the tide marks on the tree; the cross-hatched panel, *a*, the fresh water; and *b*, *c* and *d*, the sea-water, which during the dry season alternately covers and uncovers the tree-trunk.

The Four Jiritja Men of Melville Bay

During *bumun* (creation times) four *jiritja* men,[83] *Djamburi*, *Wanatpai*, *Dandarunga* and *Kainoltja*, created a number of natural features at each of their camps along the shores of Melville Bay.

Plate 128A is the complete design of the painted pipe; *a* is *Djamburi*, *b* is *Wanatpai*,[84] *c* *Dandarunga*, and *e* *Kainoltja*. Each of these men is smoking a pipe. The four squares at *f* are four wells, each man having his own. Their footprints are in panel *e*.

3. BODY PAINTING

In north-eastern Australia the art of body painting is most important, for it is by means of the designs painted on the novices during the various age-grading ceremonies, and on the fully initiated men while engaged in their totemic rituals, that the totem, the clan group, *mala*, and the linguistic group, *matu*, of each individual can be recognized. As far as the present evidence goes (the investigation is far from complete) it seems that each *matu*, which may include several *mala*, has its own specific design, which is the personal property of that group and cannot be used by any other.[85] During the circumcision ceremonies[86]

83. It is the mythical men of the *jiritja* moiety only who smoke. It is of interest to notice that the four men depicted on this pipe are not smoking the long Malay pipe, but one which resembles those used by our own party, called by the aborigines *kaiput* pipes. Nowadays all aborigines smoke, but a member of one moiety will not use a pipe decorated with the designs of the opposite moiety without the owner's permission. If he did so, the spirit of the pipe would make him ill.

84. See bark painting of *Wanatpai*, Pl. 95B.

85. See myth of the origin of the design of the crabs, *gunjun*, p. 290.

86. In north-eastern Arnhem Land the boys are circumcised when they are from six to eight years of age.

[text continues on p. 402]

3: Mountford E-5 (1948) 1956 OII7 Muragin OII7

paintings and other art objects are performed, with little variation, over most of Arnhem Land (Fig. 2).

(c) Another characteristic of the art of north-eastern Arnhem Land is that certain designs, or arrangements of designs, are the exclusive property of individual clan or language groups. Some of these, according to the myths, were first produced by a mythical forbear, the ancestor of the totemic group which owns that particular design. The fact that many of these are present in the art of the Celebes suggests a link between the two areas and is worthy of more investigation.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17

the men's duplicity. This is particularly apparent in the Djanggawul myth (*vide*, for example, Chapters I and IV). Merely because they do not join in certain of the most sacred mysteries, women do not feel "left out" of things, or pushed aside into what has been termed by some writers a profane existence, with attendant feelings of inferiority. On the contrary, they realize that they have a supplementary function in maintaining camp dancing, and answering the men's ritualistic calls from the sacred ground. It is necessary, for instance, that they prepare food for the men at such times, and observe certain tabus. A woman must know her own totemic clan songs, inherited from her father, and to a lesser extent those of her mother, and be able to sing them on appropriate occasions. She must know the correct dance movements and steps to accompany the men's singing in the "outside" ceremonies, as well as in the sacred rituals where she has her own part to play. There is no jealousy of the men's performances alone on the sacred ground. The men, so women say, are performing these ceremonies not only for themselves, but for all the people in general. This is simply a normal extension of the sexual division of labour and activity.

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The story of the Wauwalak is rarely told in prose by a story-teller of this region. Usually it is transmitted from one group of men to another, through the generations, in ritual, accompanied by explanations, on the ceremonial ground. Moreover, the whole myth is related in the sacred "inside" Wauwalak cycle of some hundreds of songs, in two main series: the "inside" Bush cycle, and the "inside" seaside cycle, each describing in detail the adventures of the Sisters. There are also the "outside" (secular) Bush and seaside cycles, sung in the main camp to the dancing of women: these continue the story, and reveal many aspects of the myth. Each one of these songs is representative of the very best in native poetry,[1] which it is not possible to set down in the bare general translation presented here.

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The Wauwalak myth begins in a region usually unidentified (*vide* Chapter IX), said vaguely to be somewhere south in the "Bush". This means, perhaps, that the Wauwalak sisters came from the direction of the Roper River, the hypothetical home of the Kunapipi Mother and her two daughters, the Mungamunga. In any case, the Wauwalak came northwards at an early period, towards the mainland opposite the Crocodile Islands (that is, near Milingimbi), bringing with them the rituals of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*. Then the myth itself became to some extent localized in northern Arnhem Land. It is on the mainland south of Milingimbi that the most sacred totemic sites connected with the Wauwalak are found:

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1. This is reserved for a detailed study of the Wauwalak Cycle in relation to the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ceremonies.

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
OI17 Murngin OI17

5.

THE CEREMONIAL EXCHANGE CYCLE IN ARNHEM LAND

When a newcomer in Arnhem Land settles down among the people, he quickly becomes familiar with the material culture and technology and is struck by the localised and restricted nature of the distribution of certain elements and minor traits and even of technological materials, and by the extreme conservatism of the people.

In the case of certain elements—in particular, the *mintji*, the magnificent patterns in polychrome, the totemic designs which are the hereditary property, the "copyright", of a group called by these people, *barpuro*, (a clan or an aggregation of clans, linked by the possession of common totemic ancestors)—this is understandable. Anything, whether social or material, which touches the solidarity of these closely-integrated groups, is jealously guarded, and its infringement bitterly resented and quickly avenged.[31] So that prudence, as well as conservatism, plays a part in restricting

[31] Sometimes this may be averted by expiatory or conciliatory payments of food or *gerri* to appease the injured or offended sentiments of the individual or group, which serve to restore a state of *euphoria* or ritual goodwill. But these presentations are invariably carried out in a ritual or ceremonial manner which gives them the stamp of formal approval of the society acting as a group and so lifts them above the level of mere personal or private feuds.

184 the free use of certain elements, because they are regarded
424 as the special prerogative of one clan or group of clans. This
614 applies most strongly to matters which relate to clan totemism, but in material culture it may extend even to such
[226] things as the technique of fish capture, the right to practise some specialised method of fishing, such as the *gorl*,[32] which have been developed in adaptation to peculiar local conditions and which are regarded as the exclusive property of the members of one clan or group of clans, who alone have the traditional right, not merely to fish in one territory, but even the exclusive right to practise the technique itself. In the case of the *gorl*, which is one of the most specialised methods of fish capture found anywhere in the world, this can easily be explained, for the technique is used only in one area on the Glyde River where it is localised in the territory of one or possibly of two, clans, and is therefore regarded as under protection of the *wänärr*, the ancestors of the clan or clans concerned.

184 The restriction of the use of such traits and specialised
424 techniques as the *gorl*, which are jealously guarded, and of
[688] which any infringement is bitterly resented and visited by
[685] vengeance, often leading to fighting and interclan feud,
[628] rests upon the belief that the heritage which its members have received from the *wänärr*, the ancestors of the clan, has been infringed, and that its solidarity has suffered damage thereby, rather than from economic motives such as the desire to monopolise food supplies, raw materials, or *gerri*, as with civilised man.

181 Even apart from these matters which touch on the
184 solidarity of groups and which therefore restrict the distribution of a trait or process, the people are extremely

[13] [32] See Donald F. Thomson, *A New Type of Fish Trap from Arnhem Land, Northern Territory of Australia*, Man, 1938, No. 216.